

VIGIA  
VIGIA  
april'16

NEWSLETTER

  
museudabaleia  
CANIÇAL | MADEIRA

museology

This month object: Sperm Whale tooth.

history

Sperm Whale *Spout*.

science

Cetaceans and marine traffic in Madeira.

education

Culture and Education – two faces of the same coin.

# museology

Giving continuity to object of the month rubric, has been selected a sperm whale tooth with 15 centimeters. Sperm whales was the main hunted animals in whaling in Madeira.

## OBJECT OF THE MONTH



Sperm whale tooth with 15 cm. The sperm whale was the target species of Whaling in Madeira. This species is classified in the sub-order of Odontoceti (cetaceans with teeth), since it has between 50 to 54 teeth (depending on age) placed in its lower jaw, used to capture their prey (particularly giant squids). Some whalers took advantage of the abundance of teeth and bones resultant from the hunting and used these materials for the production of artistic pieces and daily utensils. One of the subsequent arts of use of these materials was the scrimshaw, which consisted on painting the teeth.

### Denomination

Sperm Whale tooth

### Material

Ivory

### Donation

Fernão Gonçalves

### Inventory number

MB350

### Localization

Madeira Whale Museum  
Canical

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# history

## Sperm Whale Spout

Sperm whales were the main hunted animals in Madeira whaling (1941-1981). Males of these marine mammals can reach 18 meters long and 57 tons. They feed on giant squids that live in the deep oceans, because of that they have the particularity of diving regularly up to 3.000 meters and last more than 1 hour long. But as all mammals they need to come back to the surface to breath, and this limitation is what made them vulnerable and easy to detect by watchman through their breathing blow.



It was the breathing blow that the watchmen looked for when they were searching for sperm whales. Animals were easily detected and identified by their breathing because the sperm whale breathing blow was the characteristic of being leaned forward and to the left due to the blowhole position (hole through which they breath).

When whales were detected, a rocket was launched by the watchmen to alert the whalers that they must go to the fabric in order to start a new hunt. A big confusion settles in the small fishing village of Caniçal. Woman also complied with their part, leaving everything they were doing and rush to prepare a meal for their family, because long hours of work were expected...



## Cetaceans and marine traffic in Madeira

Human population growth has increased environmental damaging inputs such as marine traffic. This has been associated with wildlife disturbance, and its effects are expected to increase with traffic expansion. A particularly impacted group are cetaceans, known to play an important role in the sustainability and regulation of the marine ecosystems.

The archipelago of Madeira, as other areas of the Atlantic Ocean, is a feeding, reproduction and breeding ground for cetaceans. An assessment of the marine traffic can therefore provide a valuable contribute towards wildlife conservation measures.



Common dolphin, the most observed species of cetaceans in offshore waters of Madeira EEZ

*“The waters of Madeira are inhabited by 28 species of whales and dolphins, approximately 33% of all known species of cetaceans in the world.”*



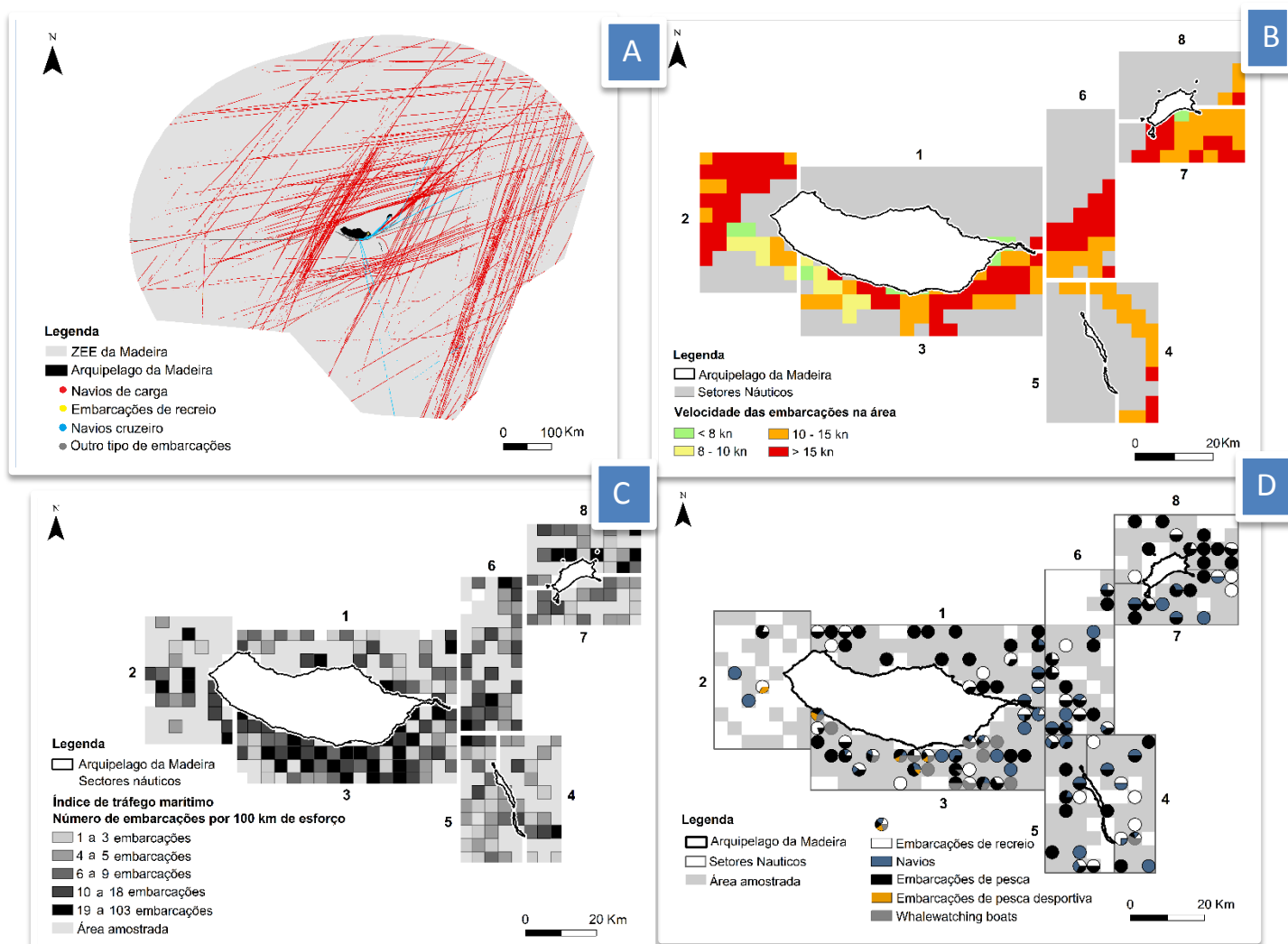
Madeira Whale Museum's sailboat "Mestre André"

# science

The analyses of AIS data, provided by Administração dos Portos do Funchal (APRAM), shows that the offshore traffic is mostly composed by cargo ships, navigating over fixed routes and mostly using the area as a passage zone towards different destinations, and cruise ships that intersect the area to reach Funchal's port, mainly traveling at speeds over 10Kn (figure 1 A and B). The Madeira Exclusive Economic zone is crossed, on average, by 188 and 34 vessels per week, in the offshore and inshore area, respectively.

According to the data collected during inshore shipboard surveys ran by the Madeira Whale Museum, the coastal marine traffic is mainly composed by fishing boats (47%), recreational boats (24%), ships (17%), whalewatching boats (10%) and big game fishing boats (2%). The South and East coasts of Madeira present a greater traffic activity (figure 1 C).

An inshore preferential area, common to both vessels and cetaceans, but further studies are necessary in order to understand the level of impact. Nevertheless, the disturbance should not be very high, since the animals still use the area, indicating that it should be, at least, tolerable.



## Culture and Education – two faces of the same coin

Education thinking and exercise the teaching activity requires a critic positioning about what to teach to children, youth and adults. The need to engage students in educational practices is certain, associating these to a cultural dimension

In this line of thought the Madeira Whale Museum(MBM), invited by Madeira's Professor Union, participated in the Talk Cycle "Debater a Educação, Perspetivar o Futuro" (Debating Education, Prospect the Future), whose edition has held in Machico, on 15th April, and addressed the theme Culture in Education. In this conducted talk cycle were presented educational projects developed by the institution, linking them with the cultural dimension inherent to the MBM.



Talk Cycle "Debater a Educação, Perspetivar o Futuro".



This year edition has held in Machico, on 15th April, and addressed the theme Culture in Education.